

# Senegal's chief finds real relief: in millions

**S**enegalese President **Abdou Diouf** journeyed to the United States hoping to find debt relief for his country. He got \$42 million worth of it.

But the biggest concern at Tuesday's state dinner was the day's proceedings over in the Senate Caucus Room — the first in a series of confirmation hearings for Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas.

"He scored every time they handed him the ball," said **Robert Woodson**, a fellow black conservative.

"I think it was a clear win for Judge Thomas," reported Republican Colorado Sen. **Hank Brown**, a Judiciary Committee member. "Not only with his moving opening statement but with his taking the 'natural law' [issue] off the table. That was a concern of mine."

During the day the judge had been grilled by the committee, particularly Chairman Joseph Biden, on his prior interest in natural law. (The theory of natural law holds that the Constitution protects rights not enumerated or specifically set down in the words of the document.)

It was the kind of day when CNN rings through offices throughout the city.

"My whole staff was watching," said Republican Kansas Sen. **Nancy Kassebaum**, who sprinted into the White House on black pumps, almost late.

Some of the night's guests, however, were a bit less forthcoming.

How did former drug czar **William Bennett**, who also sneaked in late, hurrying along with wife **Elayne**, think the nominee performed?

"Good."

And did Supreme Court Justice **Antonin Scalia** pay attention to the day's happenings?

"Didn't," he said with a Cheshire catlike grin.

Despite Topic A, some guests got into the spirit of the evening.

**Dizzy Gillespie** came dressed in the shiny silver fez of an African chieftain, an honor bestowed upon him by Namibia last year. During a past state dinner, Mr. Gillespie sang a bouncy duet of "Salt Peanuts" with then-President Carter. This time, the jazz great joked, a more appropriate ballad might be "When the Saints Come Marching In."

Also on hand were Democratic Sen. **Sam Nunn** of Georgia with wife **Colleen**; Republican Rep. **Herbert Bateman** of Virginia with wife **Laura**; newly appointed U.S. Ambassador to the Seychelles **Richard Carlson** and wife **Patricia**; actress-turned-Democratic maven **Kitty Carlisle Hart**; National Council of Negro Women President **Dorothy Height** and **Robert Hall**; Black Entertainment Television's **Robert Johnson** and wife **Shella**; acting CIA Director **Richard Kerr** and wife **Janice**; Notre Dame's **Richard "Digger" Phelps** and wife **Teresa**, and Ford Foundation President **Franklin Thomas**.

The toast was warm. President **Bush** noted that Senegal was the first sub-Saharan country to "say to Saddam Hussein, 'Your aggression will not stand.'" (Senegal, part of the Persian Gulf war's coalition forces, lost 93 soldiers in a plane crash during the conflict.)

Both leaders pledged to continue to further the cause of democracy — Mr. Diouf looking to a day when the ballot, not the bullet, will rule.

But after dinner, it was back to Topic A, which Mr. Bush discussed with reporters.

During Mr. Thomas' emotional statement, Mr. Bush said, "I don't think there was a dry eye in the

house. I felt exactly as I felt standing next to him at Kennebunkport."

Mr. Bush added he expected the senators involved in the confirmation process to be fair.

Standing behind Mr. Bush, flamboyant actor **Dom DeLuise** waved his cane, spoke in French and posed for pictures with the 6-foot-10-inch Senegalese statesman and his wife, **Elizabeth**.

After moving into the East Room, guests watched the Boys Choir of Harlem perform selections by Cole Porter and Duke Ellington, as well as "America." Afterward, the youngsters seemed to care little about Senegal, the Supreme Court or even Mr. Gillespie.

All they wanted to do was meet Detroit Pistons guard **Isiah Thomas**, attending with wife **Lynn**. "Next time you're at the [Madison Square] Garden," said 17-year-old **Tracey Sydnor**, "throw the first one in for me."

— Anne Gowen

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Date 13 Sept 1991